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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Dean & Director of Studies in Science
Professor M. J. Pentz
BSc MSc Phys MSc Eng (Capetown)

2nd December, 1974

Professor Joshua Lederberg,
Department of Biological Science,
Stanford University,
Stanford,
CALIFORNIA 94305,
U.S.A.

Dear Professor Lederberg,

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Bernard T. Feld, with whom I recently discussed the project which is the subject of this letter. As you probably know, Bernard Feld is the present Secretary-General of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and is in London during the current year.

The project is one which I shall be undertaking over the next seven years or so, starting at the beginning of next year, when I shall have a year's sabbatical leave, and, hopefully, completing in 1981 when I shall again take a year's study leave. The project is supported by the Open University's own research funds and applications have been made for support from outside sources.

We propose to make a study of the responses of scientists, individually and institutionally, to the qualitatively new relationship between science and society that has developed in recent times, especially during and since the Second World War. These responses have, as you know, been both varied and variable, and have been manifested at both the national and international level. At the international level we shall probably focus our attention initially upon the Pugwash movement, and study in depth its origins, significance and influence.

This will lead naturally, at the national level, to a study of scientists' responses to what Bernard Feld calls the 'inside or outside dilemma' - whether scientists have had or can in future have a more positive social effect as advisers within the state apparatus or as critics without. We intend to concentrate our studies at the national level initially in five countries: USA, UK, France, Germany and the USSR.

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Our study strategy will include a critical evaluation of the available published material and also individual discussions with people who, like yourself, have been or are concerned and involved in one way or another with these problems. We would hope to secure permission to study unpublished archives, where appropriate, and to create new 'archives' in the form of tape recordings of our discussions - in both cases subject to the normal provisos.

We would, of course, publish the results of our researches in the appropriate journals and hope also to produce a substantial book at the end of the project. I should perhaps mention that my position as Dean of Science in the Open University and the Open University's leading position, internationally, in the development of new systems of higher education, using mass-communication media, open up possibilities for the incorporation in Open University courses of some of the results of our proposed research. This would mean a vastly greater audience than would be reached through normal publication channels.

I am now in the process of planning a visit to the USA in the earlier part of 1975, in the course of which I would like to meet a score or more of scientists on the West coast, in the Chicago area, and on the East coast. You will appreciate that considerations of time and cost impose a need to organize these visits rationally in time and space, which of course implies doing so well in advance.

I am writing now to ask you (a) whether you would be willing to meet me for at least an initial discussion about your possible collaboration in this study, (b) whether there is any period between January and June, inclusive, when you will definitely not be available, and (c) whether there is any time which would be particularly convenient for you.

On the basis of your reply, and those of others, I would write back as soon as possible to propose a definite date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Pentz', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael J. Pentz